FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

From the Articles of Incorporation, 1950.

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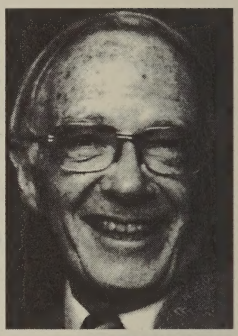
Cover photograph by Cliff Moore



In The Gift of Prayer,* *the first line of the Dalai Lama's contribution begins, "May all beings be happy." What a wonderful wish! May everyone be happy-starting with yourself.*

Well. What would make us happy? A new car? A bigger, better house? More money? Satisfying those desires might do the trick-but not, in my experience, for long. Soon, we'd want more, or better, or different things.

How about a world at peace? That would be a tremendous and lasting benefit—not only for us, but for all beings everywhere. But what can you and I do, as individuals, to help bring about a more peaceful world? One of the best ways is to start with yourself and work to develop a more peaceful mind.

Can we really train our minds to be more peaceful? Think of the angers that explode around you: in your family, your circle of friends, at your place of work. Think of the anger that boils up in you when you feel that someone has done you wrong. How can you deal with that? Well, no matter what the occasion, or who's to blame, if only one of the combatants were able to keep his or her cool, able to keep the peace, there would be no fight, would there? And that person can be you.

The first step in training your mind to be more peaceful sounds very difficult. Christ told us that when we are being unfairly and unjustly attacked, to turn the other cheek. Buddhists say to take all blame on ourself. When things go wrong, when we find ourselves embroiled in emotional problems, financial problems, domestic relationships—whatever—we tend to blame someone else. By the same token, we are often unfairly blamed by others. So turning the other cheek, taking all blame on ourself, sounds like rather a masochistic thing to do.

But consider the real, visible, logical consequences of doing otherwise. If you blame others, if you angrily deny that you're to blame in a situation, your own capacity for aggression is greatly expanded. You

* The Gift of Prayer: A Treasury of Prayers from the World's Spiritual Traditions *is a Fellowship in Prayer book of over 400 classic and contemporary prayers. At your bookstore now.*

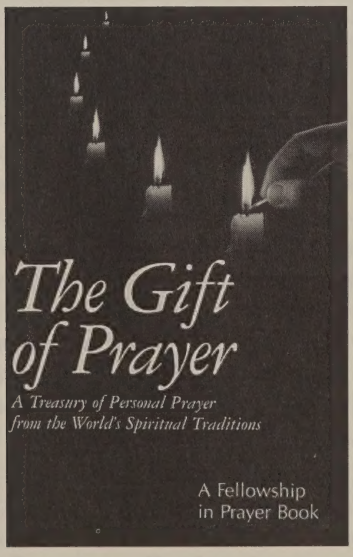
have again watered and fertilized the seeds of anger, self-righteousness and vindictiveness in yourself and in those blaming you.

On the other hand, when you take all blame on yourself you water and nourish the seeds of compassion and peace in yourself, and everyone benefits. By blaming yourself, even though you are not at fault, you reduce the anger and tension and paranoia that's happening all around you, and give peace a chance. When you say "It's all my fault," you defuse the situation. You make it possible for the other person to lower his or her defenses, discuss the situation more calmly, and perhaps even acknowledge their part in the problem.

When you do this, when you take all blame on yourself, you're really "walking the walk." You're turning good intentions into right action and creating peace all around you.

In your family, in your neighborhood, at your place of work, you can transform the poison of blame into the healing medicine of peace, and by that practice make these words of ours come true: May all beings be at peace.

Paul Walsh



Joy and Loving-kindness: An Interview with Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche

The Venerable Lama Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche and his brother, Venerable Lama Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche, were born in the Dhoshul region of eastern Tibet. The family was semi-nomadic, living in the village during the winter and moving with the herds to high mountain pastures where they lived in yak hair tents during the summers. The monastery for the Dhoshul region was called Gochen, and their father's family had the hereditary responsibility for administration of the business affairs of the monastery. Their grandfather had been both administrator and chantmaster in charge of the ritual ceremonies.*

At the age of five Khenpo Tsewang entered Gochen monastery and studied there until the communist Chinese invasion of Tibet forced him to flee with his family. There he continued his studies, earning two B.A.'s and a M.A.

Subsequently, he taught poetry, philosophy, and psychology, as well as Dharma studies, at the Nyingma Institute in Nepal. In 1980 he was called to the United States to work with Dudjom Rinpoche at the Yeshe Nyingpo Center in New York.

*In 1988 he and his brother, Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche, founded the Padmasambhava** Buddhist Center, a nonprofit religious organization. The Padmasambhava Buddhist Center now has chapters in twelve cities in the United States, including Puerto Rico, and two in Moscow, Russia. The primary center is located in New York City where the brothers maintain their permanent residence. Other centers, at this writing, are located in Florida, Tennessee, Maine, Delaware, Illinois, New Mexico, California, Colorado, and Princeton, New Jersey. Khenpo Tsewang has taught in Tibet, India, Nepal, England, France, Belgium, Australia, Canada, Russia, Puerto Rico and throughout the United States. He and his brother recently co-authored a book,* The Door to Inconceivable Wisdom and Compassion.***

The interview that follows took place in the Rinpoches' New York City apartment and was conducted by Paul Walsh, president of Fellowship in Prayer, and FiP Advisor Anne Walsh, a Jungian analyst with a practice in New York and in Princeton, New Jersey.

* Rinpoche: a title of great respect bestowed upon especially qualified masters.

** Padmasambhava: 8th c. founder of Tibetan Buddhism. Especially revered by the Nyingma School, the oldest of Tibetan Buddhism's four principal schools.

*** You may order a copy from Sky Dancer Press, Box 1830, Boca Raton, FL 33429

FiP: We would like to begin by asking you about your life in Tibet and how you came to this country.

KHENPO TSEWANG: My brother and I were born in Kham, in eastern Tibet. Eastern Tibet is very beautiful. Because of its high altitude there are a lot of pine trees, junipers, meadows, and glaciers. It is just an ideal place, especially in the summer.

Winter would be wonderful too if there were modern facilities as you have here, the heating systems—all of that.

My brother, Khenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche, is a little older than me. He joined the monastery when he was seven years old, and after many years of intensive study received the title of Khenchen. In the west that would be similar to the academic title of professor. When I was six or seven years old I, too, went to the monastery. It was a wonderful life. There were many young monks. We would play, study, and also sometimes do a little fighting like all children. We had a very good time but then, as you know, Tibet was invaded by the communist Chinese around 1950 and our father, who is a very advanced spiritual teacher, decided to flee Tibet and try to bring his family to safety in India.

> Again it was winter. We had left our home in the winter, but now a year had passed and it was winter again. . . . Usually it only takes two weeks to travel the 300 miles to Padma Ko on foot, but it took us a whole year.

So in February, 1960, we took a few belongings and left—my father, my mother, my two sisters and my brother and I. It was very cold and harsh and none of our relatives wanted to go with us because we were going directly to Padma Ko in southern Tibet. My father wanted to go there because Guru Padmasambhava, in his prophecies, had directed Tibetans to flee to Padma Ko when bad times came.

Padma Ko has a climate like a tropical jungle, so you can't take your horses or sheep or yak, which are high altitude animals. Also, you can't take your animals because you have to cross the Himalaya mountains, and there are no roads and the way is steep and narrow and far distant. Our relatives decided not to go with us because most Tibetans are farmers and rely heavily on their animals, and without animals you immediately become poor. So, instead of going directly to Padma Ko, most would go west towards the Lhasa area and gradually see what

Ron Wagner

Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal Rinpoche

they could do. My father, however, wanted to go directly to Padma Ko. We were very sad because now we would be all alone, with only our family.

So we left and started a journey that was heavy with difficulties. Three or four times we were caught by the Chinese. One time they put us in a labor camp, guarded by the army, with other refuges who were fleeing Tibet. We were captured by the Chinese three more times but finally we were able to escape for good. We crossed a big river along with another family that we met on the road and we all traveled together. Normally nobody can cross this river except by the bridge or by boat. But my father knew some techniques of the water flowing system and so we watched, and just at the right moment we

jumped, holding on to each other, and in this way we were able to get across.

On the other side there is a mountain, and on the other side of that mountain was Padma Ko, where we were trying to go. But again it was winter. We had left our home in the winter, but now a year had passed and it was winter again because we had been delayed from our direct route by being caught by the Chinese. Each time we managed to escape, hiding in the mountains and going here and there. Usually it only takes two weeks to travel the 300 miles to Padma Ko on foot, but it took us a whole year and still we had not yet arrived, although we were very close.

There was nothing to eat, and we couldn't plant seeds and wait for food to grow, so the situation was very difficult. We were told about some kind of tree—we didn't know its name—that was supposed to be very nutritious. The root, leaves and fruit had to be chopped and ground.

When we had crossed that river, we all threw our few pieces of luggage on the bank of the river and lay down to hide. There were some Chinese going back and forth, and we thought they were looking for us. Maybe not. One of the reasons they neglected us was that we had been saying that we had a very contagious disease. We even told that to the Tibetans we met, since we didn't know them. So we told them, too, that we all had this disease. In Tibet, when you have this particular contagious disease, you put different herbal medicines mixed with clay to cover the big lumps that appeared everywhere. So we smeared a mixture of clay and herbs on our faces and hands and told people not to come near to us because we were very contagious. The villagers really thought that we were seriously sick and they even spoke with the Chinese and requested them to let us go so they wouldn't get the disease. Finally the Chinese took us and put us in a kind of concentration camp with another family. We told the Chinese that we were all contagious because we had had to sleep together. The Chinese military kept the gates closed for about 24 hours. Then, because we were families with small children, the Chinese didn't think we were resisters, or going to try to escape, or give them any trouble. So they pretty much neglected us, After about a week, the Chinese

started to get careless. For example, two men were assigned to guard us. The shift changed about every four hours, then new guards would come. In the morning they would watch us to see if we were getting sicker, or were planning anything. Gradually the shift became a little longer and the time between shifts increased from fifteen minutes to sometimes forty minutes. That gave us the opportunity to make a run for it. On one side of the camp was a sharp incline, or cliff, and the Chinese were down there. The other side was the jungle, so that is the direction we decided to take. The next time the shift changed we ran, and looking back we saw the two Chinese kind of wandering back and forth looking around. We weren't sure if they were really looking for us or not. We believe that because of our "contagious disease" they were glad to see us go. We stayed two or three hours just keeping quiet and then we went deep into the jungle.

In the jungle there were other families whom we knew, who came from our area in Tibet. They had been there for a long time, maybe two years. The Chinese knew those families were there. They had become sort of native to that area, so our plan was to mingle with them

Ron Wagner

Kenchen Palden Sherab Rinpoche with his brother, Khenpo Tsewang.

in their homes in the hope that the Chinese wouldn't notice that we were newcomers.

Earlier, as we were walking toward the jungle, there was a big Chinese army unit marching toward the east, but we hid in the bushes so that they wouldn't see us. As we approached these Tibetan families to meet them, we were very concerned that there were Chinese there, workers or spies who would catch us again. We were very worried and we thought and thought about what to do. My father was slowly going forward toward these families, getting closer and closer. There were many dogs there and they started barking, louder and louder, as we got closer. Then one woman said very loudly, "Why are these dogs barking so much tonight, maybe there are some bears in this area." We continued to creep closer, listening and listening, and we heard someone chanting a mantra. Then we heard someone saying that they were very lucky today because the Chinese Army marched in this direction but didn't come to this area. "We were saved today by the Buddha," they said, "but who knows what will happen tomorrow?" When we heard them say things like that we felt full of confidence that we could go to them. And then someone, perhaps our father, gave a series of whistles and we were allowed to come forward and identify ourselves. After saying who we were we were able to stay with that family for a few days while we prepared to cross the big mountain.

In the Padma Ko area where we were going, there is no salt. So if you can take salt there, you can trade it for just about anything. That is what people do. But salt is very heavy and also in Tibet it's very cheap. So now we exchanged most of our things for salt and carried as much as we could with us.

In trying to cross the mountain you must first go down into a big valley and then climb up to the one pass. The area just below the pass is considered one of the most secret places of Padmasambhava. One of the great masters revealed many hidden secret treasures there. A huge stone image of Hayagriva, the horse-headed deity, is near a temple. It is also very famous in history as a place of pilgrimage. So we went there and performed a ceremony and prayed. We decided to spend the night, but around midnight somebody shook us awake and said the Chinese were coming, so we quickly gathered up our remaining luggage and began to cross the mountain.

Even in normal times that mountain is very difficult to cross because the path is blocked by snow. But luckily, for us, that year there was

not too much new snow, only the glaciers that are always there. So we began climbing. It was very difficult because we didn't have proper tools. It was so icy and so cold you couldn't really cut steps. We were just constantly sliding on ice. Everyone had a small knife and we moved very slowly. By the time we reached the peak of the mountain, the sun was shining. I don't remember much, but my parents and brother were so happy! I think they never really experienced happiness like that before. Mother and father felt we were finally free from the Chinese and were really on our way. We stayed many hours there, doing a lot of prayers and practices, and then we looked back toward our homeland for the last time and started down the mountain. It was very easy going down and when we reached the bottom we found the snow was melting because this side of the mountain was warm. I remember as we walked through the deep, melting snow that we had to lift one foot up and the other would go down very deep so that by the end of the whole day, as the sun began to set, we were just able to get to where there was no snow on the ground. Everyone was so happy that now we were out of trouble. That night, everyone was so joyous and relaxed. Where we were looked like the Pure Land (Buddhist Paradise), my parents and brother said. Each time we would wake up we would look to see if it was true that we were really free at last.

FIP: But you weren't in India yet?

KHENPO TSEWANG: No, we were still in Tibet but now we were over the Himalayan Mountains and the Chinese couldn't go there because there was no road. The mountain is so steep and covered with bamboo and trees, and there are so many ups and downs. If we had modern technology that place would be the best place to stay the whole year round. Whatever you can get in Florida or Puerto Rico you can get in this area. They grow rice, corn and bananas and many other things. It is really like paradise. At the same time there are mosquitos, poisonous snakes of those kinds of things. As I said, if we had modern technology, it would be best. It really is beautiful.

Then we stayed in Padma Ko for six months. Padma Ko is also the birthplace of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche. He was my teacher and the head of the Nyingmas for a long time, and he was responsible for my coming to New York in 1982.

In Padma Ko everyone was preparing to go to India because they thought that the Chinese were coming. But my father said that we were not going to India because the prophecy of Guru Padmasambhava called for us to stay in Padma Ko. He was really insisting. We stayed six months but then it was becoming very difficult to get food because so many people were leaving and they were not planting anything. There was nothing to eat, and we couldn't plant seeds and wait for food to grow, so the situation was very difficult.

> That mountain is very difficult to cross because the path is blocked by snow. . . . It was so icy and so cold you couldn't really cut steps. We were just constantly sliding on ice.

We were told about some kind of tree—we didn't know its name—that was supposed to be very nutritious. The root, leaves and fruit had to be chopped and ground. We had no experience with any of the plant life in the jungle and had no way of knowing what was poisonous, so we finally left.

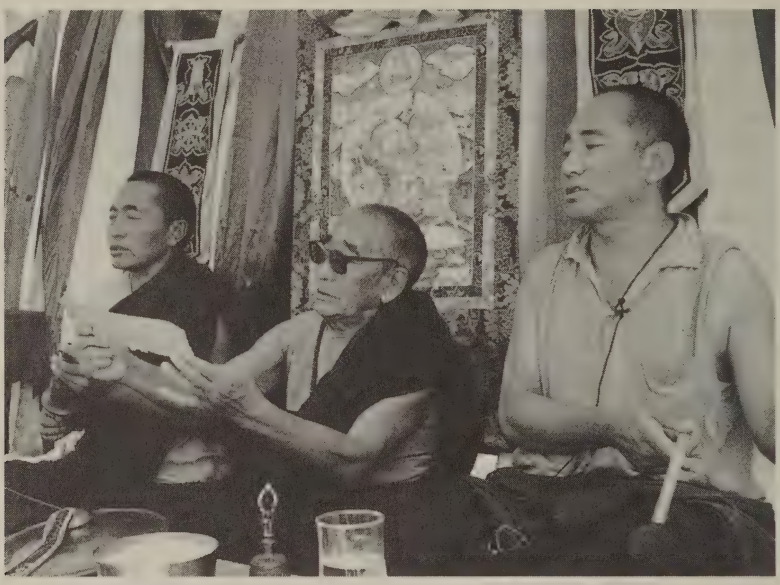
When we arrived in India, in August of 1961, the Indian people were wonderful. They gave us food and were very kind. However, it was probably the worst time to be there because it was so hot and so humid. Then our mother started getting very sick and so did our two little sisters. My brother also became ill. He got malaria and at one point he lost all of his hair. My father and I were the only ones who were alright; the rest of the family were very sick.

FIP: Did your mother and sisters survive?

KHENPO TSEWANG: No, they all died from their illnesses. Only my father and brother, Khenchen Palden Sherab, and I survived.

FIP: Did things get better when you reached India?

KHENPO TSEWANG: Yes. When we arrived at the Indian border we had a great piece of luck. Many Tibetans had traveled all the way from the Tibetan border to Assam, in India, by foot and had been traveling for months to get there. Meanwhile, the Indian military cargo



Ron Wagner

Kenchen Palden and Khenpo Tsewang with their father.

planes were bringing food to the border and flying back to Assam empty. If you were lucky, you might get a ride with them. The day that we arrived at the border was the day that the cargo plane arrived. We were cooking some food and were ready to eat when we were told, "You must come now. You can go on the cargo plane." So we packed very quickly, leaving most of our things behind, and got to the cargo plane on time. That was the first time we were ever on a plane.

FIP: How old were you?

KHENPO TSEWANG: I was about nine years old.

FIP: Getting on a plane for the first time must have been very exciting. Were you scared?

KHENPO TSEWANG: No. We had been so afraid for so long, and had so many difficulties and troubles, that at that point we were not scared of anything. We actually felt great. Now, of course, if I had to

fly in a cargo plane, I don't think I would go. I am more scared now than I was at that time.

So, finally, we arrived in India, and when we got there they were very, very kind, although we didn't know how to cook a lot of the food they gave us, rice and all those things. They even gave us medical treatment.

FIP: What was your life like in India, after you got settled?

KHENPO TSEWANG: My brother, Khenchen Palden Sherab, was asked by His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche to head up the Department of Nyingma Studies at the Tibetan Institute of Higher Studies in Varanasi, India. It was the only Tibetan University outside of Tibet at that time. My brother remained in that position until 1983.

Meanwhile, Dudjom Rinpoche asked me to teach at the Nyingma Institute in Nepal. Then, in 1979 or 1980, my brother and I were invited to visit the United States and give some teachings in California, where my brother had some students.

I had a three-month vacation coming to me at the time, so I was asked to accompany my brother and translate for him. After much back and forth, arrangements were made and we arrived in California on January 10th, 1980.

Then in May of 1980 His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche came to California and we met to discuss future plans. He said that Khenchen Palden should go to New York to teach because he was on a one-year leave of absence from the Institute, and I was to go with him.

We came to New York and after two or three weeks His Holiness joined us and suggested that we apply for a green card. Once you apply for a green card, you know, you can't leave. It takes a long time; and I had to stay. Then His Holiness asked us to take charge of the Buddhist center he had established in New York. And that's how it happened.

FIP: But you're no longer with that center.

KHENPO TSEWANG: No, in 1987 we resigned. We had other projects we were committed to develop, especially one in Sarnath, India, that was the vision of Dudjom Rinpoche. He had given my brother personal responsibility for Sarnath. So that's when we started the

Padmasambhava Buddhist Centers — here in New York and in other cities across the country as well as in Russia, Puerto Rico and India.

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Part II of the interview, giving Khenpo Tsewang's teachings on joy and loving-kindness, will appear in the next (April); issue of *Fellowship in Prayer*. Don't miss it!

Ron Wagner

At the Padmasambhava Buddhist Center, celebrating the conclusion of a week-long retreat

The Curé of Ars—Today

ERYK HANUT

Humble, simple, passionate, totally dedicated to serving humanity; amystic so human that anyone of us can aspire to imitate his love, the Curé of Ars, Saint Jean-Marie Vianney, is truly a saint for our times.

Everything conceivable has been said about saints—except perhaps the essential: that what is essential about saints is their "way of being."

Jean Marie Baptiste Vianney was born in 1786, in rural France about to stream with the blood of its beheaded King. Very early he felt himself called to God. It was more of an order, perhaps, than a call. Vianney became a priest because he had no choice. And yet, how black with crosses his path to the priesthood was! It was only after a thousand crises of doubt, failing exam after exam, untold humiliations, fought-back tears (later he would let them flow), that at last, at long last, Vianney became a priest. Even then he didn't become a "real" priest: just an assistant. The clergy is formal; Vianney was labeled a *minus habens,* an illiterate, good enough only to fill up the chalice before mass, a sort of old choirboy. . .

But God was watching over Jean Marie. In 1818, he was appointed priest of Ars. Ars was hardly even a village then; just a group of houses straggling around a church no one ever put a foot into. Ars was to be the battle-field of Vianney's soul, where he was going to fight for over forty years to make the word of Christ heard. Nothing defeated him. He restored the Church, and redecorated it. He stayed in it day and night, waiting, helping. To all this fervor, the Spirit added one more gift—that of extraordinary clairvoyance. He was able to lift

A writer, photographer, and set-designer, Eryk Hanut was born in Denmark, grew up in Paris, and now lives in San Francisco. His first book, I Wish You Love: Conversations with Marlene Dietrich, *an enchanting and deeply moving account of Hanut's redemptive relationship with one of the great stars of all time, will be published May 15 by Frog. Ltd., of Berkeley, CA. His celebrated photography exhibition, "Moments," took place at the Spirit in Form Gallery in San Francisco, and two collections of his photographs,* Light Upon Light: Inspirations from Rumi *and* Hail Mary, *are appearing in collaborations with the writer, Andrew Harvey, to whom he is married: Harvey translated Hanut's article and the excerpt from* Anarchist of God *from the original French for Fellowship in Prayer.*

the veils from the past and future, to give back the paralysed their legs and the blind their eyes. "It isn't I doing this," he would say, "Do not worship me; I am the last of the last." Ars, that had been only a handful of farms thirty kilometers outside Lyon, became a kind of Rome, a Mecca for hundreds of thousands of pilgrims; stables were converted into hotels or shops of "holy souvenirs."

He himself would trudge around the countryside begging potatoes for "his children" from the farmers.

The Curé of Ars confessed, welcomed, absolved, cried out and wept aloud twenty hours a day, year after year. With the inheritance his father left him, Jean-Marie bought a house where little poor girls could get a bed, a plate of food, and an education. There again, he had to fight to keep alive this house of "Providence." He himself would trudge around the countryside begging potatoes for "his children" from the farmers.

All the poor of France seemed, sometimes, to be on the road to Ars. There, at least, they knew they would be loved. One evening in August, 1859, the Curé died, exhausted, utterly worn out, like a lamp with no more oil. He was beatified in 1904, canonized in 1925, and declared "patron saint of all the parish priests of the universe."

And what then?

Helping is the one luxurious joy available to everyone.

It isn't interesting to love Jesus uniquely because he made Lazarus rise from the dead. Facts only exist while they are being realized: It's the echo which is our real example, not they themselves.

The message of the Curé of Ars is simple, even primal: Love and Help.

This poor little ugly neglected curate was an emperor, and one who claimed no empire for himself, except that of the heart. "I am nothing," he would say again and again. "It is God who does everything." What a difficult sentence to imagine coming out of the mouth

of our modern so-called "masters," whether Christian, Buddhist, or Hindu, or a little bit of each.

My grocers are Mexicans. They have never heard the name of the Curé of Ars. They are trying to bring up three little girls and haven't the time or the money to be able to attend workshops on "How to regress into past lives." Each Friday, they distribute fruits and vegetables to the poor of the district. They are "ordinary saints."

I am certain there are little "Curé of Ars" everywhere, working in the shadows. Old women who bake cakes for the homeless, men who spend their evenings three times a week with friends dying of Aids or cancer.

We still have time to do something, although time is running out. The years to come will have to be years of SOLIDARITY, or not be at all. We do not have the right any more—or the time—to make excuses for not helping all we can and going on sitting in the lotus position, smiling beatifically. "Give away everything until the end," said

Tom Dunham

Isaiah. "Our only possible future," said the Curé of Ars, "is for us to become saints."

Our world is split in two—between those who try to slim down and those who try to get something to eat.

Our world is split in two—between those who try to slim down and those who try to get something to eat. We are not responsible personally, it's true, for the poor man we cross begging in the rain, or the desperate young woman with a child; we become guilty the moment we pass by without reacting. Helping is the one luxurious joy available to everyone.

Let our friend the Curé conclude this for me: "What will we ever love, if we do not love love?"

The Death of the Curé of Ars

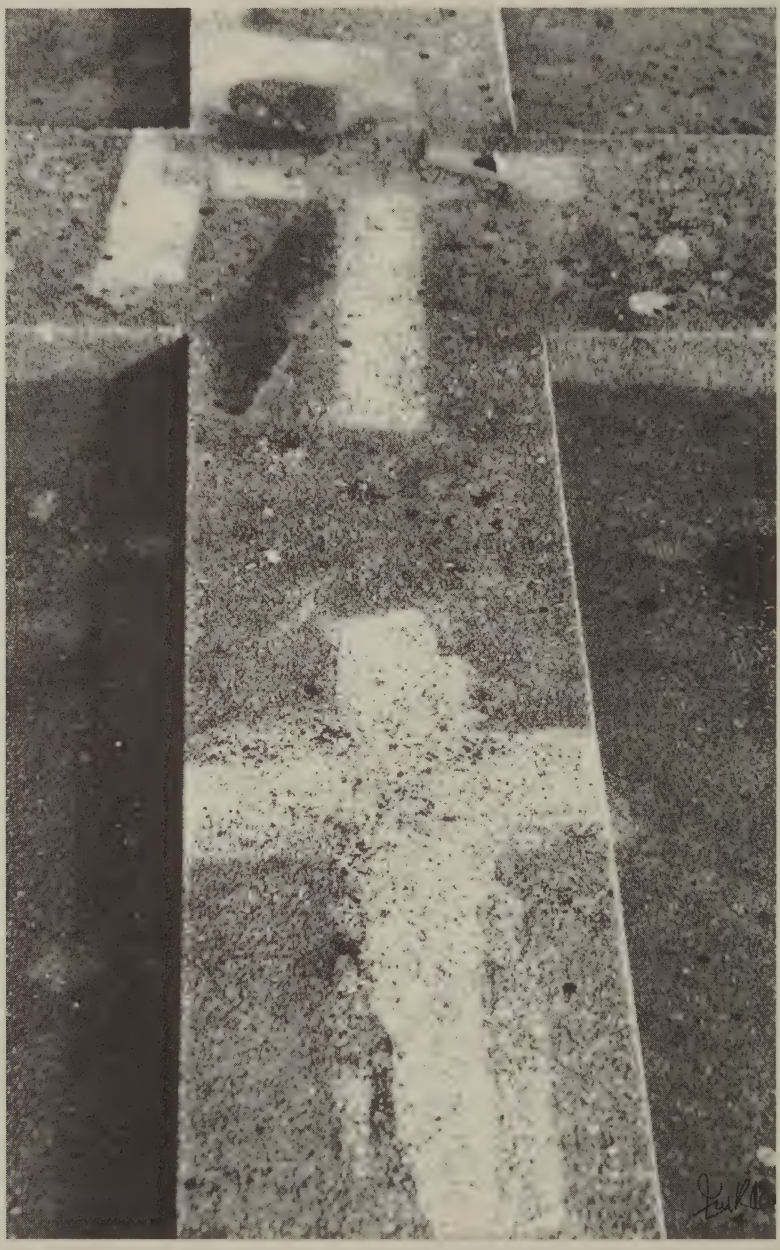
The following excerpt is taken from Eryk Hanut's latest book, a book of rare beauty, already acclaimed a spiritual classic, Anarchist of God. *Like St. Augustine addressing God in the* Confessions, *Hanut speaks directly to the dying Curé.*

When the Abbé Toccanier urged you to describe your relationship with God and the consolation you drew from it, you let slip this ambiguous and mysterious confidence, "Oh my friend, that is something I can't express."

This "something I can't express" at last caught up with you. You grew weaker and weaker. No one could deny it any longer. Some times, in the confessional, you fell asleep for twenty minutes at a stretch. Your assistants protected your sleeping and calmed as they could the waiting throng of pilgrims.

On All Saints Day in 1858, your voice had become almost inaudible. Only a hoarse whisper escaped your lips. On Easter Sunday that year, you repeated, over and over again, for a quarter of an hour, the same phrase in the pulpit "We will see Him face to face my children, we will see Him face to face," and your tears flowed like a river of joy.

That June, for the first time, you could not carry the crucifix throughout the procession on Ascension and the villagers of Ars saw that their curate was leaving them. To those that took up your heavy brass cross that day you protested "It isn't heavy, it isn't I who am carrying it, it's He who is carrying me." Yet you tottered and staggered nevertheless. July was stifling. Repeated heat-waves invaded the church and made its temperature asphyxiating. The pilgrims kept going out to get some air, but that luxury was denied you. You died on the battlefield, as you always knew you would. For some time you had been heard whispering, "The sinners will kill the sinner," but no one paid any attention. After all, hadn't you recovered your health so many times? Your fragility was cast in iron. You were eternal. "Besides," the elders of the village would say, "Monsieur Vianney has always seemed old. Thirty years ago, he looked the same as he does now. No one wanted to see your face grow more and more desperately haggard. No one wanted to see that you gasped for breath at every step, that your shoulders were sinking into your chest, that each bench, each chair



Eryk Hanut

served you as support and crutch in your ant-like progress across the church. God's vampires would drink your blood to the last drop.

One evening towards the end of July, you allowed yourself a moment of recreation. You crossed the square and went to bless the little boys of the village school. You held them all to you and then went home to bed earlier than usual. Those who saw you stumbling across the square on the way back at last began to open their eyes. "Our Curé is really sick," they said. You died, like Molière, on stage, even if your theater was a cramped tomb-like confessional. You died while going on doing what you had always done best, all your life, and no one saw the black shadows inching closer, and everyone went on wanting more and more from you, more and more. . .

Your whole village, which had made you suffer for so long, was now one burning prayer, as burning as the boiling air of those days.

One midnight, you dragged yourself out of bed and could barely dress yourself. How heavy the door of the church was that night! The sacristy had never seemed so far. After hearing the second confession, you crumpled. Catherine Lassagne, your assistant of so many years, ran to you and helped you up. You gasped in her ear, "My poor end has come." Always that word "poor," for Christ was "poor," the poorest of the poor. . .

Everything went fast after that. Catherine put you back to bed. For the first time in forty years you were laid out on a real feather mattress, substituted for your usual ragged pillows of straw. The fact that you didn't even protest against this luxury alarmed everyone.

It became hotter and hotter. Your whole village, which had made you suffer for so long, was now one burning prayer, as burning as the boiling air of those days. The younger men set up covering around the roof of the presbytery, and the huge flapping canvasses were hosed down with water as if during a fire, to try to keep the heat from you. But nothing , nothing at all, could reach you now.

The moment you had been afraid of all your life—when you would "appear before God"—had come at last. But it was written that, as the end came closer, your fears would dissolve. You grew more and more peaceful. Flies ran over your face; someone went to brush them away.

You murmured, "Leave me with my poor flies; sin is the only annoying thing." Tiny, ravaged and pitiable, you had gone to meet your Legend, which in a few hours was going to be born. You had become the Crucified One whom you had struggled to imitate all your life, all your long, poor, life.

You received the Last Sacraments, weeping "How sad it is!" "Are you in pain?" someone asked you. "No, but it's sad to take communion for the last time. But how good God is! When I can no longer go to Him, he takes the trouble to come to me."

The message of the Curé of Ars is simple. . . : Love. . .

One by one, the priests filed into the room. A few privileged pilgrims had the honor to gaze at you one last time. You had already gone to sleep for this life, even if your heart was still beating. What remained of your voice was only a strange, stifled sound, the sound of footsteps in the snow. Your eyes closed, you smiled and blessed imaginary—or invisible—crowds. Again and again you repeated, "We will see Him face to face, we will see Him face to face." Those were your last words. Your body still had a few hours to fight on; it was well trained. Where were you in those hours? Did you see Him already? Had you become again the small shepherd-boy of the Mountains of Beaujolais, making Virgins out of clay? It was finished, as written. All was well.

A few weeks before, you had said, "I know someone who wouldn't be at all surprised if he wasn't let into Paradise." Only you could believe such nonsense.

At two o'clock in the morning, the storm that had been gathering during those weeks of terrible heat burst like an enormous tear over the world. You used the hideous, distracting din it made to slip away as gently and noiselessly as you had always wanted to live.

Next day, Antoine Givre, the little shepherd whom you had asked the way to Ars forty years before and had promised to show the way to heaven, dropped dead in the middle of his wheat-field.

Tenth-Century Celtic Wish

I wish, O Son of the living God, ancient eternal King, for a secret hut in the wilderness that it may be my dwelling.

A very blue shallow well to be beside it, a clear pool for washing away sins through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

A beautiful wood close by around it on every side, for the nurture of many-voiced birds, to shelter and hide it.

Facing the south for warmth, a little stream across its enclosure, a choice ground with abundant bounties which would be good for every plant.

A few wise disciples, I will tell their number, humble and obedient, to pray to the King:

Four threes, three fours, fit for every need, two sixes in the church both south and north.

Six couples in addition to me myself, praying through the long ages to the King who moves the sun.

A lovely church decked with linen, a dwelling for God of Heaven; then, bright candles over the holy white Scriptures.

One room to go to for the care of the body, without wantonness, without voluptuousness, without meditation of evil.

This is the housekeeping I would undertake, I would choose it without concealing: fragrant fresh leeks, hens, speckled salmon, bees.

My fill of clothing and of food from the King of good fame, and for me to be sitting for a while praying to God in every place.

Manchán of Liath

A Gate for God

O God, make the door of this house wide to receive all who need human love and fellowship;
narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride, and strife.

The prayers on these two pages are from The Gift of Prayer: A Treasury of Prayers from the World's Spiritual Traditions, *a Fellowship in Prayer book. Ask for it at your local bookstore. Over 400 classic and contemporary prayers.*

Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling-block to children, nor to straying feet, but rugged and strong enough to turn back the tempter's power.

God make the door of this house the gateway to your eternal kingdom.

Inscription at Saint Stephen's Church, Walbrook, London

Families

For our absent loved ones we implore your loving-kindness. Keep them in life, keep them in glowing honor; and for us, grant that we remain worthy of their love. . . . And grant us courage to endure lesser ills unshaken, and to accept death, loss, and disappointment as it were straws upon the tide of life.

Robert Louis Stevenson

May All Beings Be Happy

May all beings be happy
May all beings be free from suffering
May all beings be at peace.

The Dalai Lama

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You have I appointed to serve me, and you have I chosen and made to be mine. To you have I given the most precious of rewards, the fairest of gifts, the greatest of graces. I am the searcher of hearts, the one who knows the mysteries of the invisible. I am the object of your desire, I, who read the secrets of the heart. You are my saint, my beloved. You are mine and I am yours.

Abu'l-Fayd

God does not waste power. God gives power to those who have tackled something so big, so overwhelming, that their own resources are quite insufficient. Such a tackling of a task too big for human power is the opening of the door through which there comes the rushing of a mighty wind of the spirit.

Halford E. Luccock

In the difficult are the friendly forces, the hands that work on us.

Rainer Maria Rilke

When I was a youth the country was very beautiful. In both the woodland and the prairies I could see the trails of many kinds of animals and could hear the cheerful songs of many kinds of birds. When I walked abroad I could see many forms of life, beautiful living creatures which Wakanda had placed here; and those were, after their manner, walking, flying, leaping, running, playing all about.

But now the face of all the land is changed and sad. The living creatures are gone. I see the land desolate and I suffer an unspeakable sadness. Sometimes I wake in the night and feel as though I could suffocate from the pressure of this awful feeling of loneliness.

Native American

The journey from this world to the next is easy for the believer: the journey from the creatures to the Creator is hard: the journey from the self to God is very hard: and to be able to abide in God is harder still.

Abu'l-Qasim

When I pray with all my mind and heart, and truly seek God and give myself, I meet God's Presence.

Howard Thurman

Spirituality and Service: The Work of Dorothea Lynde Dix

HANNA FOX

This great social reformer spent her life pleading the cause of women prisoners who were kept in chains and scantily clothed because they were "lunatics" and therefore "couldn't feel the cold."

Women have traditionally expressed their religious beliefs and spirituality through good works and caring. Most nineteenth century female social reformers felt that they were divinely inspired to serve and improve the lot of others. Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802-1887) is a perfect example of how a deep religious underpinning can lead to a lifetime of service.

Dorothea Lynde Dix was born on April 4, 1802, the first child of Joseph Dix, the proverbial "black sheep" of his prominent Boston family. In fact, he was asked to leave Harvard because he cut so many classes and didn't pay his bills. After that, he failed in an apprenticeship to learn the trade of apothecary that his father had set up for him. Soon after, he married Mary Bigelow, significantly beneath his family's social station. His father sent him and his new bride to look after Dix property in Maine. But Joseph had other ideas and turned to Methodism. As a small child, Dix often visited her grandparents in Boston, where her grandfather doted on her. But he died when she was only eight, leaving a huge gap in her life, and no one to keep an eye on Dix's father.

Her father bacame a lay intinerant Methodist minister, took an oath of poverty, and traveled extensively in the rural areas of New England with 'his wife and three small children. He was prone to religious ecstasy and heavy drinking; her mother, always fragile emotionally, became a semi-invalid after the birth of Dix's youngest brother. As a minister's daughter, Dorothea Dix took for granted that the church was the path to God's world. Her early religious training included a thor-

Hanna Fox is Program Officer of the New Jersey Children's Trust Fund. . .to prevent child abuse. Her short stories, feature articles, essays, poems, and excerpts from her novels have appeared in numerous publications, including the New York Times, Transatlantic Review, *and* Kelsey Review. *Her dramatic works have been read and produced in New York and Princeton, where she has taught creative writing for many years. She is currently writing a play about Dorothea Dix entitled* Dorothea.

Photo Courtesy of Trenton Psychiatric Hospital

Dorothea Dix

ough knowledge of The Bible and classics. Throughout her life, Dix claimed she never knew childhood, yet she was deeply affected by hers. Surely, her mission to save souls, to speak for those who could not fend for themselves, and always to care for children, stemmed from those painful early years in Maine.

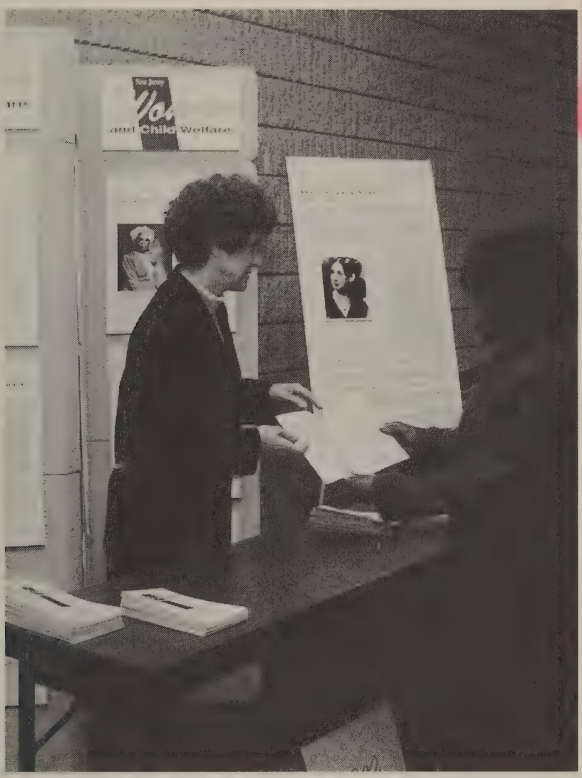
Dix was 12 when her mother insisted they move in with her family in Worcester. Upon their arrival, her father put Dix to work binding religious tracts he planned to sell as he spread his brand of Methodism. Dreading the embarrassment that would follow, she sought refuge at grandmother Dix's home in Boston. Here she was exposed to the family's conservative Congregational parish and to her grandmother's extremely strict, orderly and rigorous regime in contrast to the emotional instability and fanatic fundamentalism of her parent's home.

By the age of 14, Dix knew she would have to have an independent income in order to care for her two young brothers. First she convinced her grandmother to let her teach poor children in a makeshift classroom in the barn. Then she set up a school for "proper" young girls at Dix Mansion and charged a fee for teaching them. Dix always thought she would be a writer and published her first book, a basic elementary school reader and book of facts, *Conversations on Common Things,* in 1824, followed by *Hymns for Children, Selected and Altered,* in 1825. Although she liked teaching, she did not feel it was her divine mission.

Her grandmother introduced Dix to prominent Boston families through whom she met eminent men of religion, politics and letters. Samuel G. Howe, the renowned philanthropist and educator, Horace Mann, legislator, educator and abolitionist, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, the literary luminary were to play important roles in Dix's life work.

In sorting out her religious beliefs, Dorothea Dix found herself drawn to the human aspects of Jesus, to Jesus as a man of action. She responded to his simple command to feed the poor and comfort the sick. Thus, she felt a kinship to the Unitarian movement, which had a strong commitment to social action. She began attending services at Unitarian churches and met William Channing, the leader of the Unitarian movement in Boston. In the 1820s, Dix traveled with Channing and his family, as governess to their children. It was through Channing that she learned to be a witness from within, not simply an observer. Also through Channing, she met Joseph Tuckman, the Unitarian minister who, under the auspices of the church, made thousands of visits to homes of the poor to aid and assist them. His work showed Dix that social reform could be done in cooperation with an institution and within the framework of the system.

Dorothea Dix was frail physically. Her lungs were weak and she had the habit of pushing herself to the point of exhaustion. As a young woman, she would drive herself in her teaching and writing, then have to take long periods to recover. All the while, she longed to find her true calling in life. This calling began to take shape after an extended stay in England in 1836, where, near collapse upon arrival, she was nurtured back to health by the William Rathbone family. It was at this time that she met William Tuke, Superintendent of the York Retreat for the Insane from whom she learned about "moral treatment,"



Hanna Fox describing the work of Dorothea Dix

which he was using there. This new form of treatment was based on the belief that by treating the insane with respect and by providing a safe, nurturing environment many could regain their sanity and return to a normal life. At the same time, Dix was receiving "moral treatment" from the Rathbones, which restored her health. The combination of experiences had a strong impact on her.

Dix's life was very different when she returned to Boston. While abroad both her grandmother and mother had died. Her inheritance from her grandmother enabled her to live modestly without earning a livelihood. She began her lifelong pattern of traveling, and she never set up her own household. She was still in frail health. Her lungs were still weak and she had to pace herself. During this period, she be-

came more and more interested in the problems of the insane poor and treatment of the chronically mentally ill. The concept of "moral treatment" had traveled across the Atlantic. Committees had begun to study the plight of the insane throughout New England.

In March of 1841, while teaching a Sunday school class at a jail in East Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dix noticed women in chains, scantily clothed—kept that way because they were "lunatics" and "could not feel the cold." Appalled, she reported her findings to Samuel Howe and asked him to do something about the situation. She could not, she told him, because her physician had given her only a year to live due to her chronic weak lungs. Mr. Howe is alleged to have replied, "Then you had better make it a good year."

She did. And went on to live to 85! Thus began the remarkable odyssey of this unusual woman, who dedicated her indomitable spirit, intelligence and energy to speaking for those who could not speak for themselves, the indigent mentally ill.

Dix conducted a survey of every almshouse and jail in Massachusetts to see how "lunatics," epileptics and "idiots" were treated in institutions throughout the state. She traveled, usually alone, notebook in hand to gather eye-witness information. With impassioned rhetoric, she graphically described the squalid conditions and desperate state of existence of these people. Most important, she reached out to them, drawing upon her compassion and understanding, touching their humanity. And they responded.

Dix wrote a "memorial" that was presented to the Massachusetts legislature (women could not appear before the state legislature at that time). The bill she pleaded for, which supported building new units for the mentally ill in the existing state hospitals, was passed. One by one, she covered the states of the Eastern seaboard and moved westward, perfecting her strategy of "hands on" research and documentation of the conditions in prisons and almshouses, writing memorials to be presented to state legislatures and publicizing the importance of the bills. She played a key role in improving or founding more that 30 mental hospitals in the United States. In all, she traveled more than 60,000 miles by stagecoach and train and personally visited more than 9,000 mentally ill across the country.

Dorothea Dix had a special relationship with New Jersey. Efforts to pass legislation creating New Jersey's first mental hospital had failed before she arrived on the scene. "I come to ask justice. . .for those who

Eryk Hanut

Light Through Darkness

in the providence of God, are incapable of pleading their own cause," began Dix's memorial presented to the state legislature in 1845. The bill to finance the hospital was passed unanimously. At last, her vision to build a modern hospital for humane care of the mentally ill was realized. She was even consulted about the location and design of the new hospital because of her detailed knowledge about facilities for the mentally ill, and in 1848, "her first-born child," as she referred to the hospital, opened in Trenton. To this day, a small Dorothea Dix Memorabilia Room exists in the hospital, adjoining the Executive Board Room. It contains some of her belongings, including her water pitcher, her portable writing desk, a wooden footstool made for her by the poet Robert Burns, and records she kept about the hospital.

In addition to appealing to state legislatures across the nation, Dix had a dream of having federally funded facilities for the indigent mentally ill throughout the United States. She spent a good deal of time lobbying in the halls of Congress and meeting with legislators in the sitting rooms of her temporary quarters in Washington, DC. Through her efforts, a bill seeking land grants from the federal government to generate future funding for the care of the mentally ill was introduced and passed in Congress, only to be vetoed by President Pierce in 1854. Worn down and disappointed, she, nonetheless, continued her crusade, carrying her mission abroad in 1856, where she even persuaded Pope Pius IX to provide better care for the mentally ill in Italy. Ceaseless in her divine mission to serve, after the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Dorothea felt it was her duty to volunteer her services. She was appointed superintendent of nurses of the Union Army.

At the age of 79, too frail to continue traveling, she retired. She spent the last six years of her life in the apartment set aside for her in her beloved Trenton hospital, facing the hills overlooking the Delaware River.

On a recent trip to the Dorothea Dix Memorabilia Room there, I sat among her belongings, looking at the pictures of the apartment she had lived in and at the records she had kept. The spirit of the woman and her mission was palpable as I held the sampler she had hand-stitched, "Work Out Your Own Salvation."

at the bedside (for Mrs. N.)

took
your pills down my throat
your needles in my veins
wares in my chest
your drugs for my pains
tubes on my insides
gauze for each bleed
for all that it's work
it's not all that I need

a prayer
just a prayer
doctor
can you pray
for me

Kraig Kinchen

Kraig Kinchen, a fourth-year student at Harvard Medical School, is planning a career in internal medicine and hopes to continue writing poetry in his spare time. He has published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (Pulse), *and was inspired to write his poem, "at the bedside," by a patient's unexpected request for a prayer.*

Visiting A Prison: A Transforming Experience

WILLIAM F. HAYNES, JR.

A cardiologist who prays with his patients takes a day off to pray with prisoners.

One evening not too many months ago, I was asked by a special friend, Sr. Lorette Piper (Retsy), a Sacred Heart nun, to speak to a gathering of young male prisoners at one of the New Jersey state correctional facilities. Retsy had been at that time involved in a prison ministry for several years. Her program consisted of devoting one night a week to worship and bible study. Another evening was dedicated to inviting a certain person to be a guest lecturer. This person might be an artist, musician, teacher, or any one of a number of other vocations. The purpose being to expose the inmates to lifestyles that were both interesting, productive, and hopefully uplifting.

We arrived at the prison at dusk. A guard patrolling in a car along the fence waved at Retsy and drove up next to us. After being introduced to the guard, we made our way to the main entrance of the building. Upon ringing the outside doorbell, a guard opened the steel door and allowed us to enter. We were then frisked and were requested to hand over our drivers licenses, and were then led to an office where we signed in. I remember being guided through a series of three sliding steel doors. The clanging noise of each door closing behind us made a powerful impression on me as we followed an officer down a hallway that led to what appeared to be a classroom.

Sitting in a semicircle were about 20 inmates. Their ages seemed to range from late teens to mid thirties. They wore the standard khaki uniforms and were from multiethnic backgrounds. I noted the usual street language as they talked and occasionally pushed one another. A guard patrolled outside the door which was kept open, and I noted an alarm bell that was handy on the desk where Retsy and I were sta-

Bill Haynes, a cardiologist practicing in Princeton, NJ, lectures widely on all aspects of healing. He is the author of A Physician's Witness to the Power of Shared Prayer *and* Mending the Whole Person, *which were published by Loyola University Press. His first book was a* Catholic Digest *Book of the Month selection, and an excerpt from the book appeared in* Reader's Digest.

tioned. Retsy introduced me as a doctor who prayed with many of his patients. This seemed to prick their interest and quiet them down a bit. I shared in some detail a part of my lifes journey with them, how I had survived a dark period about 12 years ago. It could be summarized by saying that I was so caught up in the frenetic pace of living that I failed to listen to that "still small voice within," God's vain attempts to direct me to be more attentive to personal relationships which resulted in a series of painful consequences.

One could almost touch God's presence.

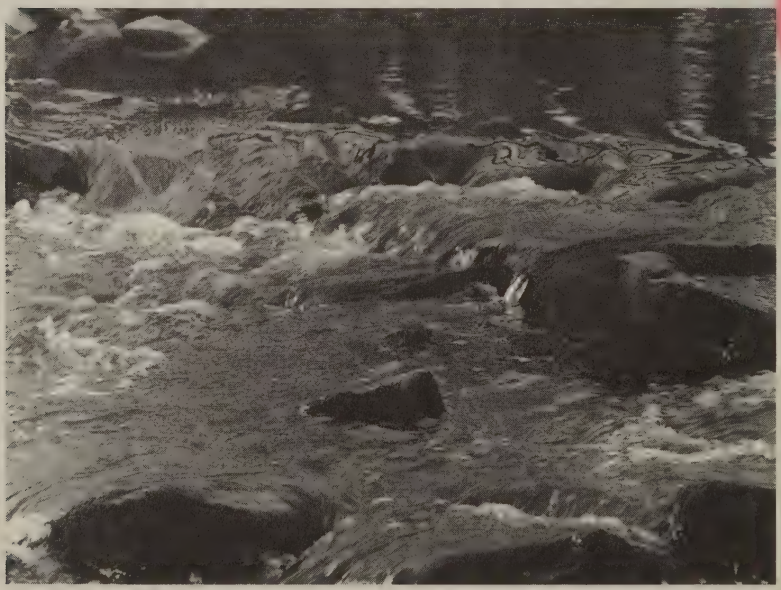
Silence reigned in the room as the inmates seemed to realize that even doctors can suffer, fail to listen, and fall away from God's love and wisdom. When life is treating us well we may become oblivious to God's blessings and less likely to acknowledge His role in everyday happenings. It may take a jolt to turn from being totally in control (the "self sufficient" person), to relying on God's perfect plan for each of us. Yet with the help of endless prayers and Divine grace we can be healed. Over a period of time, an inner healing took place in my own life making me eager to employ the power of prayer in my medical practice with some of my patients. This was the beginning of a long journey that continues today.

The session lasted about one and one half hours. I was amazed how attentive they were to my brief story. The time seemed to fly by. There then ensued a question period greatly aided by Retsy's many insights. Before long it was time to leave. There seemed to be an inner feeling that it was the right time and appropriate for all of us to hold hands and form a circle of prayer. And it was. The gist of the prayer was that we are all children of God. We are all loved by Him. We all have gifts. Each one in the room had special gifts that others in the room, including Retsy and myself, were lacking. Likewise we had talents that they didn't seem to possess. In addition no one was perfect and no matter what we have done, the Lord will forgive us if we repent and ask for forgiveness. At the conclusion of the prayer, we asked whether anyone would like us to pray daily for them over the subsequent few weeks. And if so, he was asked to sign his name on a sheet of paper Retsy had placed on the table. I was astonished when nearly a dozen inmates signed their names! We each made a copy to put on our own prayer list.

As we drove away, I mentioned to Retsy what an emptying and at the same time a fulfilling experience that visit turned out to be. She asked if I would come back again, and of course I said "yes." I've reflected upon this many times since. One could almost touch God's presence during the session. Was it because despite our different backgrounds we were really all one body after all? Could one see God in the eyes of the inmates? The eyes of the men seemed to be crying out for someone to care; there was a certain beauty present in the face of each one there. Although I realized that there are reasons for placing people in jails, and some prisoners pose a serious threat to society, I couldn't help feeling both love and compassion for these young men. The power of that evening still haunts me a year later. It was just too easy to imagine my own two grown sons there in khaki sitting in the room as we intently stared at one another.

I hope the time spent was worthwhile for the prisoners. It was a transforming experience for me. I've become more sensitive to the whole issue of prison reform, our justice system, the hopelessness of the poor, and the street kids whose very lives day after day are at stake.

My hat goes off to the dedicated workers who tirelessly week after week visit and encourage prisoners.



Janet Gnall

The Golden Years

JAMES LEO PARKINSON

Fellowship in Prayer invites you to send your own story of "spirituality and aging." You do not need to be a professional writer.

My wife was lying on her death bed, and I was kneeling all alone in the deserted church praying for guidance. My cheeks were wet as I prayed for the wisdom to be able to understand why the hand of Providence had chosen this time for, as I felt, her premature departure from life. She had just turned sixty-two last month. I was totally devastated at the thought of living life without her. We were both the same age and I just couldn't accept the fact that she would be gone from me.

A very old priest appeared from behind the altar and slowly approached the pew where I was kneeling. As he neared, I rose from my knees and sat erect in my seat. I tried to compose myself.

"Is anything wrong?" the priest asked. When I couldn't speak, just nod my head, he sat down beside me and very gently asked, "Is it something you can tell me? Maybe I can be of help."

"My doctor told me that my wife has only a few weeks left to live, I said." My voice choked and I lost control and started to sob. After a moment, I continued. "It's just not fair. Why is God letting this happen to her now? Why now? We both worked very hard during our years together and we saved a little money for our retirement. We both led good lives and never hurt anyone. And now, just as we were getting ready to retire, God is taking her away from me." I started to cry again, but went on. "Why is God doing this to me? Where are our Golden Years now? We will never get to enjoy them together now. Never. Never."

The old priest took my hand. He held it, reassuringly, and asked, "Tell me, how many years have you been married?"

"We've been married for forty years."

"Forty years," the old priest repeated; "that's half my age. I'm eighty-years-old." He looked at me and said, "My son, your God has not forsaken you. God hasn't left or forgotten you. And He never

Eryk Hanut

will." He paused, then went on, "You know, there are many who will never understand or realize this, but those forty years that you were happily married, laughing and crying together, loving each other, happily raising your family, worshiping together; my son, those *were* the Golden Years. The very golden years . . . For both of you."

I squeezed the priest's hand and thanked him for his comforting words, and I left to sit with my wife in the hospital. The old priest remained in the pew. His head was bowed.

The present is part of our Golden Years.

When I arrived at her hospital room, Jean was sleeping soundly. The nurse told me that she had been sedated for the night. I sat in the chair next to her bed and looked at her and remembered the good life we shared together. The happy times, the sad times, the lean years, the fat years, OUR years, together. It was then, sitting there, that I fully realized how right the old priest was, and an inner peace filled my entire body. Yes, he was entirely right. Those years we shared were the Golden Years, filled with golden memories. Memories that will always live in my heart. I realized, too, that we should never be obsessed with the future, to the point where we neglect the present. The present is part of our Golden Years.

Jean passed away the following day, as did the old priest a year later. I still thank him in my daily prayers for easing my pain when I was hurting and really in need of comfort. He was my personal salvation.

Praying with Archimedes

ALISON K. SCHULER

A lawyer learns unexpected lessons from Psalm 63.

Archimedes and I have had just over two weeks together. Being the baby, he is more secure in the relationship than I am. He feels not the least compunction about disrupting my sleep, my meals, my hitherto unscratched furniture, and (here the rubber hits the road), my prayer time. A foundling and a cat, he has adapted as he sees fit.

Each morning, after my son has left for school and before I go to work, I have a few precious minutes alone in the presence of God. These moments aspirate my day, providing life-giving water for the sometimes parched landscape of the law, reminding me of my calling to justice and mercy in the face of regulations and rules which sometimes squelch and imprison the human spirit. As I sit in the morning sunbeam which flings itself over the mountain into the darkness of night, the rushing pulse of my thoughts slows and I breathe in the health and joy of the eternal One who made me and all things in love. Even, or perhaps especially, Archimedes.

I am singing Psalm 63:

O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you,

echoing not only my own seeking but that of all humanity with whom I am privileged to dwell. Archimedes pounces on the Bible open before me, chewing the edges. This is novel. Until now, eating the Word had seemed to me a metaphor for my spiritual nourishment. Now, it is literal. Archimedes is bone and claw, real, taught, vibrant flesh. He will find his spirituality by gnawing on it, thank you. I move him off the book; he nips my hand and returns to gnaw some more. He is quite determined to feast before God in his own way.

Archimedes' literalism disrupts my attempts to touch the eternal through internal exploration. To him, prayer is quite clearly on this physical plane. He jumps and runs and pounces, confident in the holiness of his body and that his frolicking is, itself, his prayer. He re-

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Michelle Boyd

minds me again of the wonder of the created world and that my prayers need to flow out of that creation to the Source of it. He will not let me forget that prayer is creation being recreated by the Creator. In the fire of its formulation, in the foundry of God, prayer places me in the hands of the Master who revives me, realigns the cells of my body and thoughts of my mind, and straightens my spine, literally and figuratively. When the Master's gracious refinements in me are finished, prayer flows through the recreated me to the worried, withered world around me, and the Creator uses me and all who pray to begin to untie the knots preventing the unfurling of the fullness and health of creation.

I return to the psalm:

> So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

The memory of the Easter Vigil, candles lighting the dark church as we listen to the familiar but always new words of the triumph of life over death, lifts me again into the dazzling glory of God. I am exultant in the Presence. Archimedes pounces. Archimedes is not exultant. He knows he belongs, without more. He is who he is, every quiver-

ing ounce of him. The wonder of the Presence to him is that he breathes, scratches, nips, leaps. He does not worry about death; he is life. You are life, too, he reminds me. The essence of the Presence is life. Prayer scratches its way into life, determinedly baring the coursing blood of existence to the oxygen of the Spirit and enriching it.

I am about to give up on the psalm. Archimedes races around the room, across my lap, across the Bible, across my note-pad. He chews the pen as I try to write what I am thinking. Pens are play-things; he does not approve of their use in prayer.

I try again:

> Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

I realize that my praise of God's love must be bodily, through my lips and my mind, as well as my spirit. Archimedes is right. My pen cannot praise if my lips do not.

In ancient days, the scientist-mathematician Archimedes pondered how to determine if a crown were pure gold without destroying the crown. An overflowing bathtub gave him the answer. A golden crown, being dense, displaces less water than a golden crown with alloy, which has more volume. Like pure gold, pure prayer takes little space; it does not disrupt. Prayer adds value in context. It holds within it the densest substance of the spirit. Prayer does not add foreign matter to existence, but purifies life to become the undimmed gold it was created to be.

I finish my singing:

> My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips.

Archimedes the kitten settles in for a nap, lesson taught, and I leave for the office, lesson learned.

Making the Small Things Count

BETH ADAMS CAMERON

Please send the story of your own "transforming experience" to the Editor, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. You need not be a professional writer.

"Stop bickering or I'll send you to your rooms!" I scolded, and then felt guilty for being impatient. Both my boys were home with chicken pox and needed more attention and comforting than usual. After three days, I felt restless, weary and dissatisfied. When the afternoons seemed endless, I'd think "If only I had a job," knowing this was precisely why I didn't work. I wanted to be there for my children, especially when they were sick. It was by choice, a decision made ten years ago upon meeting a friend in the grocery parking lot. Her five-year-old, huddled in the reclining seat of their BMW, was a pathetic sight, sweaty and miserable. "Just picked her up from sick daycare," her mother said. "Poor kid has 102 degree temp and has been there for nine hours, but I couldn't miss work." That day I promised myself I'd stay home with my children when they needed me. So why did I feel trapped when I should be thankful for the opportunity?

I needed to do something to live my life on a different level. I needed an attitude adjustment. My present one wasn't accomplishing anything.

The proof came the following day when I ran the washer but forgot to put dirty clothes in the machine. The solution also came that day in the form of a small announcement in the newspaper. "Mother Teresa will visit missions and speak at an evening mass." She would be in a town 135 miles away visiting the poorest parish in New Mexico. Anticipating this event brought a new dimension to my life. I could make it through each day knowing in two weeks the boys would be well, and I'd get to hear the woman I admired more than anyone else in the world.

When the day arrived, it was raining and chilly. The freeway glistened and, although it was only one in the afternoon, a black, lightning-streaked sky surrounded me as I drove West.

Beth Cameron lives in Albuquerque with her husband and two sons. She enjoys writing, reading, teaching and spending time at the Dominican Retreat House with the Dominican Sisters.

Full of expectation, I arrived two hours early to find the parish nearly full. The atmosphere was charged with excitement, and there was a constant hum as people greeted friends and questioned strangers asking how far they'd driven or how long they'd been waiting. Some had camped on the lawn with their children all afternoon..

Suddenly the murmur hushed. Everyone turned to look down the aisle. We caught a glimpse of a diminutive lady walking to her seat to pray. A chill shot up my spine as we sang Psalm 91–"lifted up on eagle's wings." Video cameras zoomed in on the seventy-eight-year-old Nobel prize winner and flashbulbs blinked. She prayed, unaffected.

Then she stood and walked to the pulpit with the quick, purposeful stride of a young girl. My heart raced. She spoke of poverty in the United States as a lack of love and a hunger for the word of God. Love should begin in the family and extend from there she said. A family should pray together and care for each other, then the problems of teen suicide and depression would subside. Goose bumps peppered my arms. She was answering my question of how staying home with chil-

Mother Teresa visiting New Mexico

dren should be anything but humdrum. "Whatever you do in your family, for your children, for your husband, for your wife, you do for Jesus. Children come home from school and there is no one to receive them, to pay attention to them, to encourage them if they are sad, to share their joy if they are happy. They long for somebody to accept them, to love them, to praise them, to be proud of them." She emphasized it was these small deeds that mattered.

She said that we were created to love and be loved.

Although she spoke of other things, I heard what I needed to hear, and it gave new meaning to my life.

Her message was so simple. It came through her being, not through her words. She said that we were created to love and be loved and that the terrible loneliness and feelings of being unwanted could be eliminated if we practiced loving one another. This could be done in small ways. She gave the example of meeting a man who was sitting on a park bench. She shook his hand and asked, "How are you?" He replied, "It's been so long since I've felt the warmth of a human hand," and gave her a beautiful smile.

As she spoke, her eyes glistened, radiating the love we came to find in ourselves. We wanted to love for her sake. It seemed so easy. Her spirituality touched and uplifted everyone.

All too soon the service ended. The small children who had been squirming and whispering now stretched and chattered. Mother Teresa was walking past rows of pews. People sitting on the aisle reached out to touch her. A grey-haired lady wearing a shawl reached for her like a cat batting a ball, then burst into tears when her hand grazed Mother Teresa's habit.

We filed out the door in an orderly fashion and were met by a breathtaking sunset. A slight breeze rippled through the crowd of 600 milling around outside the church. All were smiling. Some were jostling through the crowd, trying to reach Mother Teresa and receive a personal blessing. She maintained an air of joyful calm while touching and blessing each person who came near her. It felt like a great celebration.

A lump rose in my throat. I felt a profound gratitude for my very ordinary life. I could have pushed my way through the crowd to

reach Mother Teresa's van. Part of me wanted to. Then I saw nine Missionaries of Charity packed tightly into the van. The innocence and joy on their youthful faces matched Mother Teresa's heart-melting smile. I remembered a line from her book. "We can do no great things—only small things with great love."* I knew I didn't need a personal blessing. I'd been blessed with small things to do, and now I needed to go home and do them with great love.

**Mother Teresa's book is entitled* Life in the Spirit: Reflections, Meditations, Prayers by Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

LOVING KINDNESS; THE REVOLUTIONARY ART OF KINDNESS
by Sharon Salzburg, forward by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Shambala, New York, 1995, 193 pages, hard cover, $16.

The need to love and to be loved is central to our lives, Sharon Salzburg tells us. Unfortunately, few of us manage—or even know how—to love ourselves, let alone others.

That ignorance is tragic because our true nature *is* love. At heart all of us are loving and compassionate. Sadly, our goodness, our kindness, is covered over with layers of ideas and concepts and notions of who we are. Conditioned and indoctrinated by our parents, our peers, our culture and a thousand other influences, we let our ego, with its fears, angers, and desires, dominate and bully us into losing sight of our true nature.

What unites us all as human beings, Salzburg says, is the desire to be happy, which at heart is a yearning for union, for overcoming our feeling of separateness.

We want to feel our identity with something larger than our small selves. But first Salzburg says, we must learn to love ourselves, our basic goodness. The Buddhist practice of *metta,* of loving kindness, is designed to put us in touch with our own true loving nature, and Salzburg offers us a half dozen meditations and exercises that do just that. According to the Buddha, "You can search throughout the entire universe for someone who is more deserving of your love and affection that you are yourself, and that person is not to be found anywhere." You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection. Your confidence in the truth of that assertion can only grow as you read and reflect on this deeply helpful and compassionate book. *PW*

THE RETURN OF THE MOTHER
by Andrew Harvey, Frog Ltd., Berkeley, CA, 1995, hardcover, 493 pages, $25.00.

One should approach this book as though entering a temple, a church, a synagogue or sacred shrine room—with an attitude of reverence and awe and a heart intent on healing our dying planet and ourselves. For this long-awaited, groundbreaking, exquisitely written, and genuinely brilliant book is for those who want to know God fully—and are ready for the holy insecurity of a self-directed religious life.

Harvey has poured into this book the immense conceptual and mystical knowledge of the Sacred Feminine that he has gained in over twenty years of studying and practicing the religions of the East and West. Quite remarkably, he turns ineffable experience into language, and succeeds in conveying with stunning clarity "the ordeals and glories of direct relationship with the Mother of the Universe."

Harvey's articulation of the Divine Feminine was profoundly influenced by two world-famous Indian sages who like himself took deep journeys into the Motherhood of God—Ramakrishna, the nineteenth century mystic-philosopher, and Aurobindo, in whom he finds "the greatest and most majestic intellect of the human race." Giving his all to recovering their understandings and to advancing the world's ancient knowledge of "the feminine face of God," Harvey pays close attention to such themes from the theology of the mystical life as initiation, adoration, purification, divinization, the Motherhood of Christ, tantra and the occult. Quite rightly, he wants us to take seriously these lost or suppressed ideas and practices so that the soul of the West will awaken in the Eternal Feminine, and we will all see "in every moment, every event, every face, every sentient living thing, nothing less than the appearance of infinite beauty."

But personal spiritual development is no more than part of Harvey's point, which always moves "from revelation to revolution," from awareness to action, from prayer to work in the world. Over and over again he writes that those awakened to the vision of Sacred Beauty, those who know and love the Mother of Reality, must and will grasp humanity's unconditional obligation to make the world "a living mirror of Her love." The Divine Mother requires, he insists, that men and women work and act and struggle and love and give and help until there is no more poverty or injustice in the world.

The Return of the Mother is Andrew Harvey's *magnum opus,* and it will be in print a very long time—as long as it takes for all of us to see the holy light that streams within us and among us, and to commit ourselves, in gratitude, as Hildegard of Bingen would say, to "working God's work with God." *MFG*

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